

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

State Child Care Assistance Policies: Oklahoma

- **Income eligibility limit:** In February 2019, a family of three in Oklahoma could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$35,100 (165 percent of poverty, 61 percent of state median income).¹
- **Waiting list:** Oklahoma had no waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2019.
- **Parent copayments:** In 2019, a family of three with an income at 100 percent of poverty (\$21,330 a year) receiving child care assistance in Oklahoma paid \$146 per month, or 8 percent of its income, in copayments. A family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty (\$31,995 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$239 per month, or 9 percent of its income, in copayments.²
- **Payment rates:** In 2019, Oklahoma's payment rates for child care providers serving families receiving child care assistance were below the federally recommended level—the 75th percentile of current market rates, which is the level designed to give families access to 75 percent of the providers in their community.
 - Oklahoma's monthly payment rate for center care for a four-year-old was \$494, which was \$112 (18 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.³
 - Oklahoma's monthly payment rate for center care for a one-year-old was \$727, which was \$74 (9 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.⁴
- **Tiered payment rates:** In 2019, Oklahoma had higher payment rates for higher-quality care.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old at the highest quality tier was 87 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
 - The payment rate for center care for a four-year-old at the highest quality tier was still below the 75th percentile of current market rates.⁵
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2019, Oklahoma allowed parents already receiving child care assistance to continue receiving it while searching for a job until the end of their 12-month eligibility period. However, the state did not allow parents to initially qualify for and begin receiving child care assistance while searching for a job.⁶

Source: Karen Schulman, Early Progress: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2019 (Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center, 2019). These data reflect policies as of February 2019, unless otherwise indicated.

- 1 In February 2019, the income limit depended on how many children were in child care. The income limit shown here assumes that the family was receiving assistance for two children in care. The income limit for a family receiving assistance for only one child in care was \$29,100 in February 2019. Also note that, in February 2019, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$48,708. As of March 2019, the income limit to qualify for assistance (regardless of the number of children that the family has in care) was increased to \$48,708 (85 percent of state median income).
- 2 Families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), foster children, children under age six adopted through the foster care system, families headed by a caretaker who is not legally or financially responsible for the children, children receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and children participating in the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program are exempt from copayments. Children receiving protective services may be exempted from copayments on a case-by-case basis. In addition, families with incomes at or below \$850 per month (\$10,200 a year), regardless of family size, were exempt from copayments in February 2019. Also note that the copayments shown here reflect policies as of February 2019; the state reduced copayments for families as of March 2019.
- 3 The state's market rate survey differentiates between quality levels and the 75th percentile of market rates is obtained for providers at each quality level. The payment rate for the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers) is compared here to the 75th percentile for providers at that same quality level.
- 4 The payment rate for the most common rate level is compared here to the 75th percentile of market rates for providers at that same quality level.
- 5 The payment rate for the highest quality level is compared here to the 75th percentile of market rates for providers at that same quality level.
- 6 Parents can only qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job if they are receiving TANF and job search is an approved activity.